

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DOD-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00
ACDA-07 EB-07 IO-13 /085 W
-----094653 270831Z/10 L

R 270715Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6306
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0723

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, PINS, MPOL, BY, RW, CG

REF:BUJUMBURA 0722

1. DURING MY LONG CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT BAGAZA ON JUNE 23 (REFTEL), I ASKED HIM HOW RELATIONS WERE GOING WITH HIS NEIGHBORS BILATERALLY, AND WITH ZAIRE AND RWANDA IN THE TRIPARTITE ORGANIZATION. ON THE LATTER, HE SAID THAT ANY PROGRESS WAS NOW "FROZEN", Owing PRIMARILY TO ZAIRE'S FOCUS ON THE SHABA PROBLEM AND TO ITS GOVERNMENT'S DISORGANIZATION AND INEFFECTIVENESS, ESPECIALLY IN DISTANT KIVU REGION. HE WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE AND HOPED THEY WOULD BE POSSIBLE, BUT MOBUTU HAD TO STRAIGHTEN UP HIS OWN HOUSE.

2. I NOTED THAT, IN THIS PERIOD OF INSTABILITY IN ZAIRE, SOME OUTSIDE POWERS WERE TRYING TO ENCOURAGE THE KABILA REBELS OF THE SO-CALLED PRP TO ATTACK ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES MORE ENTER- GETICALLY IN EASTERN ZAIRE ALONG LAKE TANGANYIKA. ARMS FOR THE PRP FROM EAST EUROPEAN SURCES SEEMS TO BE TRANSITING TANZANIA TO KIGOMA FOR TRANSSHIPMENT ACROSS THE LAKE, AND THE CUBANS MIGHT

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BE SENDING IN PEOPLE TO TRAIN THE PRP. LATELY THE ZAIRIANS HAD BEEFED UP THEIR NAVAL PATROLS ON THE LAKE (WHICH BAGAZA SAID HE KNEW), AND MIGHT HAVE HAD SOME CUSSESS AGAINST THE SUPPLY SHIPMENTS. HENCE, THERE WAS A DANGER THAT KABILA'S PEOPLE MIGHT TRY TO USE BURUNDI TERRITORY FOR THE MOVEMENTS OF PEOPLE AND SUPPLIES TO EASTERN ZAIRE. BAGAZA COMMENTED THAT HIS OFFICIALS WERE DOING THEIR BEST BOTH TO KEEP UP WITH THIS SITUATION AND TO

PREVENT BURUNDI FROM BEING USED TO UNDERMINE ZAIRE'S GOVERNMENT.
DISORDER AND FIGHTING WEST OF BURUNDI'S BORDER IN ZAIRE COULD
ONLY BE TO BURUNDI'S DISADVANTAGE.

3. AS FOR RWANDA, THE PRESIDENT SAID THERE WAS A CERTAIN "MALAISE" TEMPORARILY EVIDENT IN RELATIONS WITH BURUNDI, BUT IT WOULD PASS. I OBSERVED THAT THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND EFFORTS AT BILATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THEM SEEMED TO HAVE PETERED OUT. OTHERWISE, HOW COULD ONE EXPLAIN THE FIASCO OF THE FIXING OF COFFEE PRICES, WHEN BURUNDI'S FAILURE TO COORDINATE WITH RWANDA ON A COMMON PRICE HAD COST BURUNDI LOTS OF FOREIGN CURRENCY AND HAD PROMOTED COFFEE SMUGGLING AND THE BRIBERY OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS? EVEN WORSE, RWANDA WAS DEEPLY WORRIED ABOUT THE NEW SOVIET ARMORED CARS ACQUIRED BY BURUNDI, ABOUT MORE SOVIET ARMS TO COME, AND ABOUT THE FACT THAT BURUNDI'S ARMY WAS 50 PERCENT LARGER THAN RWANDA'S.

4. BAGAZA IMPLIED THAT THE COFFEE AFFAIR HAD BEEN BADLY HANDLED, BUT HE SAID THAT BURUNDI'S ARMY AT ABOUT 4,000 TROOPS (NOT COUNTING ABOUT 1,300 IN THE GENDARMERIE, BUT ON ARMY ROLLS) WAS NO LARGER THAN RWANDA'S. IT WAS RIDICULOUS EVEN TO IMAGINE THAT BURUNDI'S ARMY WOULD ATTACK ANY NEIGHBOR. TANZANIA AND ZAIRE WERE MUCH LARGER, AND, REGARDING RWANDA, WAS BURUNDI SUPPOSED TO NURTURE THE IDEA OF TAKING OVER BUTARE AND INCORPORATING RWANDANS INTO BURUNDI? THE ARMY HAD NO LOGISTIC CAPABILITY FOR SUCH AN ADVENTURE; IT DID NOT RPT NOT REALLY HAD EVEN BATTALION LEVEL

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FIELD TRAINING. IT WAS PURELY AN INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE. I ASKED WHETHER THE ARMY DID NOT HAVE PLANS TO GROW TO 8,000 MEN OR MORE. HE SAID THERE HAD ONCE BEEN SUCH A PLAN, BUT IT HAD BEEN ABANDONED AS SUCH A SIZE WOULD BE WHOLLY BEYOND BURUNDI'S CAPACITY TO SUPPORT BUDGETARILY.

5. I COMMENTED THAT THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT SAW THINGS DIFFERENTLY; AND THEIR CONTIGUITY TO AMIN JUSTIFIED A BIT OF IRRATIONALLY. MOREOVER, AS A HUTU REGIME THAT HAD OUSTED TUTSI RULERS, THEY WERE VERY SENSITIVE TO BURUNDI'S TUTSI DOMINATED GOVERNMENT. THIS WAS A PRESCRIPTION FOR SUSPICIONS, AND RWANDA WAS CASTING ABOUT FOR SOURCES OF ARMS TO MATCH BURUNDI'S SUPPOSED BUILDUP. THE LAST THING ANYONE NEEDED WAS A MINI ARMS RACE IN THIS PART OF CENTRAL AFRICA. ONLY THE TWO CHIEFS OF STATE COULD RESTORE PERSPECTIVE AND NORMALCY TO BILATERAL RELATIONS. HABYARIMANA WAS A SOLID CITIZEN, DEVOTED TO RWANDA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND HE WOULD SURELY MEET BAGAZA HALF WAY. I HOPED THAT DURING BAGAZA'S PLANNED STATE VISIT TO RWANDA IN AUGUST, BAGAZA WOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO OVERCOME THIS NOT SO LITTLE "MALAISE".

MARK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BUJUMB00723
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770228-0713
Format: TEL
From: BUJUMBURA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770615/aaaaamzk.tel
Line Count: 115
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4f5cda75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BUJUMBURA 722
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2024209
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH PRESIDENT BAGAZA
TAGS: PARM, PINS, MPOL, BY, RW, CG, (BAGAZA, JEAN-BAPTISTE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4f5cda75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009